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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003175

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EPRT WASIT: WASIT GOVERNOR

Classified By: Classified by: ePRT Team Leader Wade Weems, E.O. 12958,
reasons 1.5 (b,d)

11. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) Summary. Wasit Governor Abd al Latif Hamad Turfa is a self-proclaimed political independent who meets regularly with ePRT. In a 16 September meeting in his office in Al Kut, the Governor, dressed as usual in a western business suit, discussed his views on Iraqi politics, tribes and security issues. He stressed his willingness to work with CF, his disdain for the former regime, his inclusive approach to governing and his close ties to the PM and key cabinet members. Governor Latif said he followed "every detail" of the Amb Crocker/CG Petraeus Congressional testimony and thought it was a "good report with good balance." During the nearly two-hour meeting with IPAO he did not stray from his upbeat demeanor except when he reacted tepidly to the ePRT's tribal engagement plans. End summary.

All is Congenial in Wasit Politics

12. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) Governor Latif emphasized that he and his four deputy governors are politically independent. He stressed that he does not have a background in the ISF or any political party and insisted he is not influenced by any outside factors- his only motivation is desire to help the people of the province. He said his "policy of openness" has resulted in a two-year period free of political conflict. (Note. There have been many political conflicts in the Province during the last two years including assassinations and several violent clashes between ISCI-Badr and JAM. End note.) Latif claimed to have a good relationship with provincial tribal leaders, whom he said meet regularly in tribal councils. He denied a rumor that he told the last tribal council on 5 September not to cooperate with CF. He was complimentary of the Anbar Tribal Awakening and noted that he had organized a memorial service for Sheikh Abdul Sattar Rishaon on 17 September.

National Politics

13. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) Gov Latif considers himself close to Prime Minister Maliki and hosted him at his house during the PM's visit to Wasit in June. He assessed the CoR as dysfunctional, he does not think the attempt to bring in the Sunnis was a good idea as they are too disruptive- they "failed the cabinet."

14. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) Latif does not think the Group of Four will succeed in implementing a Shi'a Regional Government similar to the Kurdish model. He said he opposed Southern Regional Government and opined that the Kurds were too focused on independence and the overly religious Shi'as were too focused on religion and noted that both positions were at "the expense of the country." When asked about Iranian influence he noted that Iran supports both Shi'a and Sunni groups only to disrupt progress in Iraq. Latif claimed that, during an earlier official trip to Iran, he told the Iranians

that they should support a strong Iraq and to "leave America to us." (Note. Latif has been linked in past reporting to Da'wa and Iran and he is widely perceived to be under the Iranian influence. End note.)

¶5. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) In a separate meeting at the governance center, ePRT program project manager (PPM) met with the Deputy Governor for Technical Affairs (DGTA), Provincial Reconstruction Development Committee (PRDC) Engineer, Director General for Displacement and Migration and the Deputy Director of Youth and Sports DDYS). Topics of discussion with the DGTA and PRDC Engineer included ESF project nominations, the reconvening of the PRDC, and the development of CERP projects. PPM and DDYS discussed opportunities to support youth athletic and recreational activity centers in Wasit.

¶6. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) Comment. While not overly charismatic, Governor Latif can be engaging. He takes pride in his knowledge of recent US history (he named the last seven Presidents) and enjoys quoting names and vignettes from the American Civil War. He has met with ePRT and CDR 214th over a dozen times since we arrived and has shows interest on big ticket development projects while staying clear of details. As before, Latif was less than truthful in some answers, evidenced by the implausible claim that he was unaware that Georgian forces would deploy outside of FOB Delta. He accepted a brief explanation of our tribal engagement plan with a look of consternation, he asked why we needed to work with the tribes and quietly accepted that it was beyond his control. There is also reporting in other channels that Latif has significant control over the Province ISF. During monthly Provincial Security Transition Assessments he claims to be capable of overseeing the

BAGHDAD 00003175 002 OF 002

Provincial Security Council. However, the security situation in Al Kut is grim; fifteen of eighteen neighborhoods are controlled by JAM-infiltrated police or JAM units. If the Governor is indeed in control, then he is ineffective, or worse, plays a supporting role in the security problems, either directly or by being weak when confronted by negative elements. ERPT will continue to maintain a working relationship with Governor Latif while observing his actions with a skeptical approach. End comment.

Bio Notes

¶7. (S/ REL to USA, ACGU) Lateef Hamad Turfa Al Augaili. DOB/POB: 1963 in Al Hay District, Wasit Governorate, Iraq. Education: Associates Degree (equivalent) Baghdad Technical Institute. Position: Wasit Governor, appointed 10 February 2005 as a member of 221 slate (Coalition of Iraqi Allies and Cadres). Personal: Married to Iranian woman, has six girls and one boy. Industrial arts middle school teacher prior to his position as Governor. Brother was killed at age 27 by former regime, Latif has a picture of him on his desk. Latif has very basic English, probably understands English at a zero plus level. BUTENIS